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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: AUGUST 19, 2009

Summary: Reports and photographs of the capture of the Tehrik Taliban Pakistan's (TTP) chief spokesman Maulvi Umar dominated headlines in all newspapers on Wednesday. Newspapers also front-paged his statement "confirming" Baitullah Mehsud's death in a recent U.S. missile attack. U.S. Special Envoy Holbrooke's meetings with President Zardari, Army Chief General Kayani and a delegation of the Jamaat-i-Islami also received extensive coverage in all newspapers. Also underscored by several major dailies was report that President Zardari sought "more access to U.S. and European markets for Pakistani goods." The U.S. Undersecretary McHale's remarks that the U.S. "sees Pakistan as highest foreign policy priority" also received media coverage. The report of a suicide attack in North Waziristan that killed seven security personnel also received prominent display.

All major dailies ran editorials on the recent statement of Indian Prime Minister Singh's claiming that a "terrorist group in Pakistan was planning an attack in India." However, some newspapers editorialized the ongoing visit of Ambassador Holbrooke and its implication. The pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam," observed that the "wrong policies of the Musharraf regime, and their continuity under the present government, have provided ample room for the United States to expand and strengthen its influence in our internal affairs. Now Washington has decided to enhance its diplomatic-military presence in Pakistan, which would definitely be aimed at achieving some clandestine objectives." In contrast, the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder," called Ambassador Holbrooke's statement for U.S. cooperation to help ease energy crisis as a "landmark announcement" that "clearly and unambiguously reflects a major U.S. policy shift." End Summary.

News Stories

"Taliban Spokesman Maulvi Omar Captured; Confirms Mahsud's Death"
"The News" (08/19)

"A tribal Lashkar in Khwezai area of Mohmand Agency captured and handed over to security forces a top militant commander and spokesman for the defunct Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) Maulvi Omar. Omar was also deputy to Bajaur Taliban commander Maulvi Faqir Muhammad, engaged in fighting against security forces since August 6, 2008. A senior military official told 'The News' that the TTP spokesman during preliminary interrogation confirmed the death of Baitullah Mehsud in a U.S. drone attack."

"Taliban Defeated In Swat, Says Zardari" "The News" (08/19)

"President Asif Ali Zardari, while commenting on the changed environment in Swat, said on Tuesday that the picturesque valley had turned out to be the point of positive change in attitude and mindset. Talking to 'The News' at the Aiwan-e-Sadr ahead of his meeting with Ambassador Holbrooke, Zardari said that the scenes of jubilation in Swat and other tribal cities on the eve of 14th August had shown that Pakistan was united and terrorists had been defeated."

"Zardari Seeks More Access For Pak Goods To U.S. Market" "The News" (08/19)

"President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday called upon Washington to allow greater market access to Pakistani goods in the United States. Special U.S. envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke called on President Asif Ali Zardari in the Presidency. Matters relating to fight against militants, the forthcoming meeting of the Friends of Democratic Pakistan (FODP), rehabilitation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Pakistan's energy needs and strengthening of civil law enforcing agencies were discussed in the meeting."

"Holbrooke Calls On Kayani" "The News" (08/19)

"U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke on Tuesday called on Chief of Army Staff General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi."

"U.S. Vows To Meet Pak Defence Needs" "The Nation" (08/19)

"Acclaiming the role and contribution of Pakistan security agencies in fighting terrorism, the U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke on Tuesday assured Pakistan Army all-out U.S. help in meeting country's defence needs."

"Shortages Delaying FATA Push, Says General" "Dawn" (08/19)

"Pakistan would need months to prepare for a ground offensive against the Taliban in their South Waziristan stronghold, a senior army commander said on Tuesday, citing equipment shortages. U.S. President Barack Obama's visiting special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke, said Washington was trying to expedite delivery of the equipment requested by the Pakistani army, including helicopters and parts. After briefing Mr. Holbrooke on its operations against militants, Lieutenant-General Nadeem Ahmed told reporters the Pakistani army was trying to create the 'right' conditions for a full-blown offensive in the rugged South Waziristan region by imposing a tight blockade on entry and exit points, and by pounding militant targets from the air."

"Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) delegation meets Holbrooke" "The News" (08/19)

"A Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) delegation in a meeting with U.S. Special Envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke on Tuesday conveyed the party's concerns over the expansion in the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad and the drone attacks, besides raising the issue of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui's detention. The delegation comprising (JI) Secretary General Liaquat Baloch and Naib Ameer Dr. Muhammad Kamal met the U.S. special envoy at the U.S. Embassy. The JI team also handed over a document to the U.S. official containing their stance on U.S. policies in Afghanistan and Pakistan."

"U.S. In Process To Increase Pak Aid" "Pakistan Observer" (08/19)

"U.S. Special Envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke has said that the United States is in the process of increasing aid to Pakistan by four hundred percent as compared to 2007. In an interaction with journalists in Islamabad Tuesday, he said apart from cooperation in the war on terror, his country would have heavy emphasis on energy issues facing Pakistan."

"Holbrooke Says He's Nothing To Do With IPI Gas-Line" "The Nation" (08/19)

"U.S. Envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke said on Tuesday that he had nothing to do with Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) Gas

Pipeline project. While talking to 'The Nation' he said that neither he had discussed the issue of (IPI) Gas Pipeline with any of the functionaries in Islamabad nor it had any link to his job."

"Holbrooke Denies Report About Marines" "Dawn" (08/19)

"U.S. Special Envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke rejected on Tuesday reports about the stationing of U.S. Marines in Islamabad. Sources privy to the meeting between President Asif Ali Zardari and Ambassador Holbrooke quoted the latter as saying that the U.S. Embassy was being enlarged to accommodate all U.S. staff. Mr. Holbrooke's claim was endorsed by Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi: 'We know that no U.S. Marine is coming to Islamabad. Some media outlets have wrongly reported in this context.' He said he would brief the media in a few days on the factual position."

"Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Holds 'Go America Go' Rally In Islamabad" "The News" (08/19)

"The Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) activists on Tuesday marched on roads in the federal capital to denounce U.S. policies and reported expansion in the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad and the arrival of U.S. Marines, (JI) Ameer Syed Munawar Hassan led the 'Go America Go' rally."

"U.S. Persists To Assist Pakistan In All Areas: Judith McHale" "The News," "Daily Times" (08/19)

"U.S. Under Secretary of State for Public Affairs, Judith A. McHale on Tuesday said that her country sees Pakistan as highest foreign policy priority, and will continue to assist it in the journey of progress and stability. Judith McHale presently in Islamabad was talking to a private television channel in a telephonic interview."

"7 troops Killed In NWA Suicide Attack" "The News" (08/19)

"Seven personnel of the security forces including four paramilitary Frontier Corps soldiers and three Khasadars men were killed and four others were injured in a car suicide attack on the roadside check-point at Eesha Village, seven kilometers east of Miramshah in North Waziristan Agency (NWA) on Tuesday."

"Fight For Spoils Splits Taliban" "Dawn" (08/19)

"As various militant groups fight it out to inherit about two billion rupees in cash and weaponry left behind by Baitullah Mehsud, government and security officials say it will take the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan a considerable time to rebuild and recover from a shocking blow to its leadership. 'The cracks within the TTP are all too visible. In classical counter-insurgency terms, the fissures within the TTP conglomerate suggest that their decline has started. We are over the hump,' a senior security official with considerable experience in counter-terrorism told 'Dawn.' 'There is a struggle for the leadership and this would include the struggle for power, territory, stature and resources,' a senior military official said."

"34 Militants Held" "The Nation" (08/19)

"At least 34 militants were arrested while 10 others surrendered to the security forces on Tuesday in different parts of Swat region. Moreover, six houses of militants were set ablaze and demolished in Qamber area, said Commissioner Malakand."

"Muslim Khan Resurfaces, Threatens Commissioner" "The News" (08/19)

"Spokesman for Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, Swat chapter, Muslim Khan on Tuesday resurfaced after sometime by making a call to the Commissioner Malakand division in Swat and threatened him to stop action against the militants."

"Four Tribesmen Killed For 'Spying'" "Dawn" (08/19)

"Four tribesmen were killed by militants of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan in Upper Orakzai on Tuesday for 'spying' for security agencies. Sources told 'Dawn' that the bodies of the tribesmen were found in the agency's Anjani area with a note warning that any person cooperating with the government against the TTP would meet the same fate."

"Pakistan Presents Its 5-Year Strategy To FODP Next Week" "The News" (08/19)

"Pakistan will table its five-year strategy before the Friends of Democratic Pakistan (FoDPs) ministerial meeting being held next week under the head 'Partnership for Progress: Roadmap for Sustainable Development' by identifying the financing gap of around \$20 billion in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). A senior official of the government told 'The News' in an interview on Tuesday."

"Personnel Of A Private American Security Company 'Wackenhut' Deployed In Pakistan" "Express" (08/19)

"The personnel of a private American company the 'Wackenhut' have been deployed in various cities of Pakistan including the Diplomatic Enclave, Islamabad for security purposes. Hundreds of the security guards of this company, which also provides services for nuclear investigation, have been deployed at different offices, residences and the diplomatic missions in the federal capital. The Wackenhut was registered as 'Wackenhut Pakistan Private Limited Company' on December 24, 1992, and its registration period expired on December 29, 2007. The Wackenhut provides its services for nuclear, ambassadorial, emergency security, and the headquarters of its nuclear service division has been established in Florida. According to a former diplomat, dozens of the American companies have succeeded in establishing their offices in Pakistan, under different names and in the garb of NGOs, taking the advantage of simple and easy procedure of registration as a company."

"Army Has Nothing To Do With Mass Graves: DG ISPR" "Dawn" (08/19)

"The military has rejected as baseless allegations made by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan in its latest report against security forces about its involvement in extra-judicial killings and human rights abuses in Malakand. Speaking in DawnNews' program 'News Eye,' ISPR director-general Maj-Gen Athar Abbas said that the army had a strong chain of command and behaved in a responsible manner."

"Militants Set On Fire Two Schools In Lower Dir" "Dawn" (08/19)

"Militants set on fire two government schools in the Kad area of Maidan tehsil in Lower Dir on Tuesday, officials told 'Dawn.'"

"Release of \$20 Million To U.S. Lawyers; Aafia's Lawyer Files Contempt Plea" "Dawn" (08/19)

"Dr. Aafia Siddiqui's counsel on Tuesday filed a contempt of court petition in the Lahore High Court against Interior and Foreign Affairs Ministries for releasing \$20 million to American lawyers for defence of the Pakistan woman in U.S. courts, in violation of a court order."

"First Pak Satellite To Be Launched In April 2011" "The News" (08/19)

"The first satellite of Pakistan will be launched in April 2011, member Planning Commission for Science and Technology Dr. Samar Mubarak-mand said on Tuesday."

"Militant Camps Still Functioning In Pakistan, Alleges India" "Dawn" (08/19)

"India's defence minister claimed on Tuesday there were dozens of militant training camps active near Pakistan's border with India that had not been dismantled by authorities there, A.K. Antony said in the southern state of Kerala, PTI news agency reported."

"Give Us Proof, If You Got Any, Qureshi Tells India" "The News" (08/19)

"Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi on Tuesday said Pakistan had taken serious notice of the remarks of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh regarding threats to India from terrorists and conveyed a message to India through its High Commission. Talking to newsmen in Islamabad, he said: 'Pakistan wants to cooperate with India on the issue of fight against terrorism and if India has any

credible information in this regard, it should share this with the Pakistan government.'"

"Indian PM's Statement A Cover-Up: ISI" "The News" (08/19)

"Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has upped the ante by sending alarm signal of fresh attacks by militants only to cover up India's misdeeds and suppression in the occupied Kashmir which causes the domino effect in the region, says a senior official of Pakistan's premier intelligence agency."

Editorials/Op-eds

"Expression Of Anti-Pakistan U.S. Mindset," an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (08/19)

"U.S. Special Envoy Holbrooke has said that he cannot assure the transfer of predator drone technology to Pakistan. However, he added, the U.S. was ready to help Pakistan to resolve its energy crisis. Mr. Holbrooke adopts a similar attitude during his incessant visits to Pakistan. The wrong policies of the Musharraf regime, and their continuity under the present government, have provided ample room for the United States to expand and strengthen its influence in our internal affairs. Now Washington has decided to enhance its diplomatic-military presence in Pakistan, which would definitely be aimed at achieving some clandestine objectives. If the Pakistan government is serious in its opposition to the drone attacks, it must discuss this issue with the U.S. unambiguously."

"Energy Sector: Possible Areas Of U.S. Assistance," an editorial in the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder" (cir. 25,000) (08/19)

"Richard Holbrooke, the United States Special Representative to Pakistan and Afghanistan, on his current visit to Pakistan, made a landmark announcement that clearly and unambiguously reflects a major U.S. policy shift: to assist in steering us out of our worst-ever energy crisis. Though, he did not identify the areas/projects which would receive assistance, his statement has raised expectations.... One must appreciate the U.S. change in stance as announced by Holbrooke and one hopes that the two administrations are able to work together to ensure that our energy needs are met in the short, as well as the long term."

"How Many Times Will We Be Duped?," an op-ed by Shireen M. Mazari in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (08/19)

"Holbrooke's latest foray into Pakistan and the glib statements that have come forth reflect an American assumption of Pakistani gullibility. To some extent they are certainly correct, at least in terms of Pakistani officialdom which continuously seeks to place Pakistan at the altar of U.S. subjugation. Just look at a few recent events to realize the dangerous kowtowing by Pakistani decision-makers before the U.S. Incidentally, if mere size of embassies reflects friendship and good intentions towards a nation (rather than a subservient government) then one should have assumed the Soviets had nothing but love for the people of East Germany! But we know what a few thousand U.S. marines will do here, especially in terms of our nuclear assets, especially when we see the wider picture in the context of the ISAF/NATO base that our leadership has apparently agreed to provide in Pakistan. We have also had the Pakistani leadership jumping with joy over the apparent U.S. intent to help us overcome our energy crisis. So what has Holbrooke committed to?... We have seen so far is the demand that we renege on the Iran Pipeline in case we wanted U.S. energy cooperation. We are being asked to give up something already in hand for a vague promise for the future. The arrogance of the blackmail is what stands out, because we are being told that if we withdraw from the IPI project, only then will the U.S. move towards getting us the funds promised but not delivered by the so-called Friends of Democratic Pakistan."

"India's Imagined Fear," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (08/19)

"Interestingly, while the Indian Prime Minister was raising the scare of a terrorist attack, his Home Minister maintained that there was no danger of such an imminent incident. There appears to be little doubt that New Delhi wants to take full advantage of the predicament Islamabad is in, and add the factor of tension from its side.... Dr. Singh might have felt that it would take up the matter with Mr. Holbrooke, currently in Islamabad, and thought the allegation would tend to sidetrack the exposure of its misdeeds. It is time India realized that though in the short term it could complicate matters for Pakistan, in the long term, peace and understanding it would serve the interests of both."

"PM Singh's Comments," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (08/19)

"Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh made a disturbing claim: There is credible information of ongoing plans of terrorist groups in Pakistan to carry out fresh attacks.... Whatever the truth behind the allegations, it is regrettable that Mr. Singh chose to air his concerns publicly rather than take up the matter with Pakistani authorities in private. Other than pandering to a domestic lobby that is increasingly hawkish on Pakistan, it is difficult to see what purpose Mr. Singh's remarks serve. If there is indeed a threat - and it is unrealistic to believe that there is absolutely no possibility of attacks on Indian soil - then the primary aim of the Indian authorities should be to thwart it. That translates into meaningful cooperation with Pakistan, not sensational claims at high-profile events.... The net effect: Mr. Singh continues to be tugged in opposite directions, but his instincts, rightly, appear to be to restart talks, and for that he has a ready partner in Pakistan."

"Manmohan Singh's Latest Mischief: Motives Behind The Smokescreen," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (08/19)

"Indian PM Manmohan Singh has said that extremist outfits in Pakistan are planning another attack on India.... It is quite possible that India has planned to stage such an attack to frame Pakistan.... Pakistan should not rest at merely lodging protest. This situation is similar to conditions in 1971, and India can take full advantage of it. The first step we need to take is to recall troops sent to the western border so that they can be deployed at the eastern border again.... Pakistan should also not neglect informing the international community about Indian designs."

"Manmohan Singh's Apprehensions," an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (08/19)

"This is an extremely grave issue. The Indian PM's warning [that extremist outfits in Pakistan are planning another attack on India] must be taken seriously as any such act can be devastating for South Asian stability. The Government of Pakistan should ask India for more information on this matter so that timely action is taken against alleged terrorist outfits and they do not get an opportunity to enter Indian territory and wreak havoc there.... There is also no harm in the Pakistani PM calling up his Indian counterpart and requesting for more information.... At the same time, India must remain vigilant about disgruntled elements within its own public who have prepared ground for terror acts in collusion with foreign terrorists. It is also worth mentioning here that Pakistan has not been taken into confidence about such elements in connection with the Mumbai blasts."

"NASA warning of a possible Indo-Pak war over water," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (08/19)

"U.S. space agency NASA has said that there is a threat of the next Indo-Pak war taking place over water issues.... U.S. and other influential countries must play a role in preventing this war by urging India to give Pakistan its due share of water; otherwise Pakistan has the option of targeting Indian dams."

"Extrajudicial Killings," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (08/19)

"The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan has called for a parliamentary probe into allegations of extrajudicial killings in Swat. The issue is cause for great concern.... There is great danger of individuals being wrongly identified and treated as terrorists, or for the lashkars to be used as tools to settle private scores. A Taliban witch-hunt must be avoided at all cost. Neither state nor society should be allowed to resort to tactics that smack of Taliban brutality: all suspected militants must be dealt with through a transparent judicial process. Anything less would mean adopting the same lawless means that characterized the Taliban's actions."

"Revenge Killings," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (08/19)

"The security forces cannot escape the blame for having carried out revenge killings by simply conceding the presence of mass graves in the region that remained under conflict for over a month. This is not enough. Those conducting the operation will have to do a lot of explaining to clear doubts in the public mind, rather than alleging that bodies were of militants buried by other militants. The government must pay heed to the demand for the constitution of a multi-party parliamentary commission so that the issue could be thoroughly investigated and those responsible for carrying out extrajudicial killings be brought to justice."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Feierstein